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Official Records

64th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 20 February 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Jeremić ..... (Serbia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Román-Morey (Peru), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 14 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Global launch of the International Year of Quinoa, 2013

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly will resume its consideration of agenda item 14 to mark the launch of the International Year of Quinoa, 2013, and to discuss the role that quinoa biodiversity can play in providing food security and nutrition and in the eradication of poverty.

Members will recall that the Assembly considered agenda item 14 jointly with agenda item 9, entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council", at its 28th plenary meeting, on 22 October 2012. Members will also recall that, under agenda item 14, the Assembly adopted resolution 67/18 at its 43rd plenary meeting, on 28 November 2012.

(*spoke in English*)

It is now my privilege to read out the following remarks on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, who has been unexpectedly called away from New York. He has asked that I formally extend his apologies to our esteemed guests for not being able to be here in person.

"I would like to join the Assembly in celebrating the first International Year of Quinoa, 2013. I welcome the decision of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Mr. José Graziano da Silva, on the appointment of His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, as a Special Ambassador for the International Year. This appointment recognizes his leadership and commitment to the fight against hunger and malnutrition. It is an honour to welcome President Morales Ayma back to the General Assembly. I would also like to congratulate Ms. Nadine Heredia de Humala, First Lady of Peru, on her nomination as a Special Ambassador.

"Too often in the past, we have heard extravagant claims for the benefits of different foods, but it is my opinion that, in quinoa, we truly have a plant that deserves the title of 'super food'. In many ways, that traditional staple of the Andes region represents many of the ideals and goals of the United Nations. It has an important role to play in ensuring food security, boosting nutrition and, ultimately, eradicating poverty. It also brings attention to the importance that the United Nations attaches to indigenous knowledge and practice. I am deeply proud, as President of the General Assembly, to be able to heighten global public awareness of the nutritional, economic and

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poverty-reducing benefits of that ancient grain. I am hopeful that we can do a much better job in awareness-raising.

"Quinoa is a true gift from the Andes to the world — one for which I believe we should all be very grateful. The General Assembly recognizes the contribution of the Andean peoples who have nurtured and preserved it for present and future generations. Their ancient practices have respected the land and laws of nature, while providing untold benefits to them. We should pay tribute to their national and traditional knowledge and to their careful cultivation of the plant for its exceptional nutritional and medicinal qualities. I am sure that quinoa will be a topic of discussion in the General Assembly's high-level plenary meeting known as the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples, which will be held in September 2014.

"The grain is extremely high in protein and, according to guidelines established by the FAO, it is considered to be the only plant in the world that contains all the essential amino acids. In that respect, it provides superior nutrition to wheat, barley and soy beans, and compares favourably to milk protein. It also has a high percentage of dietary fibre, which makes it an ideal food to detoxify the body. It is rich in minerals, vitamins and healthy fats. Many schools in Ecuador and Peru are now including it in students' breakfast rations. In addition, the grain has been used in traditional medicine since ancient times for treating a wide range of health-related issues, including abscesses, bleeding and dislocations, as well as sore throats and stomach complaints.

"Quinoa is a highly resilient and versatile plant that grows in adverse climatic regions from sea level up to elevations of 4,000 metres — areas where most crops will simply not thrive. Its remarkable adaptability to different climates and different agricultural zones makes it an excellent crop in these unpredictable times of climate change. In addition, it is very cheap to produce and requires little in the way of inputs and labour.

"Quinoa may have its origins in the Andean region, but today this super food is beyond doubt a global crop. Its cultivation is expanding across regions and continents. Bolivia remains the world's leading producer, followed by Peru, the United States, Ecuador and Canada. It is also cultivated in northern and southern Europe, East Africa and the Himalayas and on the plains of northern India. In tropical areas, such as the savannas of Brazil, there has been experimental cultivation since 1987, and higher yields than in the Andean region have been reported.

"While the cultivation of quinoa increases across the world, research by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations shows that the grain has a huge potential to contribute to securing the food needs of some of the world's most vulnerable people. Indeed, it could play a significant role in solving the global food crisis by providing many countries with a buffer against volatile prices and a viable alternative to importing food or relying on external aid.

"Let us not forget that, according to the FAO, worldwide there are some 870 million people who are undernourished, the vast majority of whom are in developing countries. A considerable number of those people live in Africa. Quinoa is not a panacea for malnutrition across the continent but my question is: could it not play a role in keeping people fed and healthy, as it does in the Andes? That is an example of South-South cooperation that I, as President, would wholeheartedly endorse.

"Ensuring that the world is food secure and that no one goes hungry requires varied and concurrent steps, the first of which is the strengthening and revitalization of the agriculture sector, especially in the poorest countries. One way that could happen is through the empowerment of indigenous people, especially women, rural communities and small and medium-sized farmers. The Andean people have known for centuries how to grow and use quinoa, and the rest of the globe can learn a great deal from that vast wealth of knowledge. The Bolivian people are now reaping the financial benefits of that knowledge. Small farmers are planting and selling more of the crop and are seeing a significant improvement in their standard of living.

"Nevertheless, the developed world has its role to play in providing technical and financial assistance to further expand its cultivation, build capacity and transfer good practices. It is my opinion that a continued interest in quinoa as a beneficial food across the world not only will

help to boost the economies of nations in the Andean region by increasing exports but also will encourage more farmers in developing countries to cultivate the plant.

"Food security is one of the chief building blocks of poverty eradication and a Millennium Development Goal. It is my hope that we can look forward to quinoa playing an enhanced role in the Zero Hunger Challenge, launched by the Secretary-General to eliminate hunger within our lifetime. As the Secretary-General said at last year's World Food Prize Ceremony, achieving this goal depends on forging partnerships that make a difference.

"It is perhaps not surprising that the FAO has identified quinoa as one of the world's most promising crops. Even the National Aeronautics and Space Administration is researching the value of quinoa as a food fit for astronauts and long-duration space travel. Our concerns are for more earthly matters, such as how to harness the unquestionable potential of that humble plant for the benefit of humanity.

"The motto of the International Year of Quinoa is 'A future planted thousands of years ago'. It is my hope that quinoa will furnish the most vulnerable people with a dignified, healthy and secure future. It could truly provide nature's answers to global hunger."

(*spoke in Spanish*)

Continuing in my national capacity, I would simply like to say that for me, speaking on behalf of Peru, it is a special pleasure to be here at such an important and significant event as the launch of the International Year of Quinoa. As the primary producing country of that 1,000-year-old grain, for us, together with Bolivia and other Andean nations, this event is also a reaffirmation of our vast cultural heritage and its contribution to the well-being and healthy nourishment of the world. Quinoa's contribution to food, nutrition and agriculture once again underscores the importance of the sustainable use of biodiversity resources and their associated traditional knowledge. It brings a cautionary and urgent message regarding the role that biodiversity plays and meeting international commitments to biodiversity in order to achieve sustainable development and food security.

I recall with great pride that Peru sponsored, together with Bolivia and other brotherly countries, the proposal to adopt a resolution on declaring the year 2013 the International Year of Quinoa. That initiative was implemented by the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 66/221 in December 2011. Today, from this rostrum, Peru therefore reaffirms its commitment to actively participate in developing initiatives and projects made possible during the International Year of Quinoa, in particular those related to benefiting from quinoa as a key food source to combat hunger and poverty.

We thank all Member States for their commitment to and solidarity with our Andean peoples, as demonstrated by our launching of the International Year of Quinoa today.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I thank all those present for joining us to celebrate the International Year of Quinoa. This extraordinary grain has been a cultural anchor and a staple in the diet of millions of people throughout the Andes for thousands of years. Thanks to the initial efforts of Bolivia and the agreement of the General Assembly, quinoa is now poised for global recognition. I commend President Morales for his foresight and his commitment to the important issue of food and nutrition security.

Last year, at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Brazil, I launched the Zero Hunger Challenge. Quinoa can make a significant contribution. The grain has two great advantages.

First, it is highly nutritious. It is gluten-free. It contains all the essential oils and amino acids and is a good source of calcium, iron and protein.

Secondly, quinoa is adaptable. It can be grown in many different ecological and climatic conditions, including where the soil moisture is low. That is especially important in a warming world, in which desertification and land degradation are becoming ever more pressing issues.

The tolerance of quinoa to arid conditions makes it an attractive crop for farmers in all regions. That is why quinoa cultivation is expanding from the Andean region to include Kenya, India, North America and Europe. Most quinoa growers are small-scale farmers. The crop holds the promise of improved income, which

is a key plank of the Zero Hunger Challenge. Some of the poorest Andean indigenous smallholders have already benefited greatly from rising prices with the growing popularity of quinoa in export markets.

But let us also beware of potential pitfalls. As prices rise along with export demand, the poor risk being excluded from their staple grain in local markets in favour of cheaper, less nutritious processed food. Even growers can be tempted to sell their entire crop and eat less healthily.

Many nations in South America are making strong progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of reducing hunger by half. That has been achieved not just by increasing food production, but by reducing poverty and increasing access to nutritious food. Quinoa can play an important role in helping accelerate progress in South America and beyond.

The deadline for the MDGs is fast approaching. Much remains to be done. We must especially work to close the gaps among and within countries. Too many inequalities remain, particularly among remote and indigenous communities, where child malnutrition and stunting are still prevalent.

The First Lady of Peru, Ms. Heredia de Humala, is a committed member of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement Lead Group. She knows that the first 1,000 days of a child's life are decisive in determining his or her future health, intelligence and ability to contribute to society. Mothers and children need the best nutrition available. That is why the Government of Bolivia is supplying quinoa as part of a nutritional supplement programme to pregnant and nursing women, and Peru is incorporating quinoa in school breakfasts.

I believe that quinoa is truly a food for the MDGs and can make an important contribution to post-2015 development strategies. I hope that this International Year of Quinoa will be a catalyst for learning about the potential of quinoa for food and nutrition security, for reducing poverty — especially among the world's small farmers — and for environmentally sustainable agriculture.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention a third advantage to quinoa, beyond nutrition and adaptability. It is versatile and delicious, as we will discover soon when we meet for lunch. Let us work together to make sure the benefits of this extraordinary grain can be felt by those who need it most. Let us use the International Year of Quinoa to reap the harvest of the future sown thousands of years ago.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his important statement.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Evo Morales Ayma, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

President Morales Ayma (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the social movements, in particular producers of quinoa, we appreciate the significant effort of the United Nations in launching the International Year of Quinoa, 2013. We greet all the special guests here today and the representatives of the entire world.

Quinoa is an ancestral gift of the Andean people, which has been produced for more than 7,000 years and represents a valuable alternative in the current food crisis. The International Year of Quinoa is an acknowledgement of the traditional practices of the indigenous people of the Andes that, in harmony with nature, have maintained, managed and preserved quinoa in its natural state as a food for current and future generations.

In a world ruled by capitalism, the population's food requirements have become a business for profit and to promote greed for gain. The major multinational food companies seek to control the production of food and to dominate global markets by imposing their customs and foods. The only goal of such producers is to generate profits. So they standardize food and drinks, turning them into global foods produced on a massive scale with the same formula. They contain chemical ingredients that make them cheaper but that cause cancer and other diseases for their consumers. They are not interested in the health of human beings, only in their earnings and corporate profits.

In the face of the global food crisis, the Andean peoples have several proposals, and one of them is quinoa. For 7,000 years, our peoples have improved that grain, which is a gift from Mother Earth, and developing and perfecting its dietary, medicinal and regular uses.

In the sixteenth century, the European invasion sought to eliminate that grain by demonizing quinoa and prohibiting its cultivation, storage and consumption. They looked down on quinoa as food for Indians. I clearly remember that when I was a child quinoa was

very undervalued, as were the Indians. Today quinoa is highly valued by *gringos* and in the West.

The true and powerful nutritional value of quinoa has now been discovered, in particular of the royal quinoa that grows in the Bolivian highlands. Despite the persecution and the colonial and neocolonial stigma with regard to our product that indigenous people suffered over centuries — in the twentieth century it was contemptuously called the "food of the Indians", which prevented the world from knowing and enjoying it — I want to say to those here that quinoa is seen today by multinational companies as a threat to their food-production empire, which is junk food and of low nutritional value and permeated with chemicals that cause diseases. They claim that indigenous people should not benefit from the sale of quinoa and the increase in its prices to ensure fairer prices. For that reason, some non-governmental organizations and major international companies asked their Governments to oppose Bolivia's initiative to declare 2013 the International Year of Quinoa, so that this product, with its inherent nutritional and medicinal content, would not spread throughout the world. The Governments of those multinational companies, led by the Government of the United States of America, strongly opposed the International Year of Quinoa. However, thanks to the conscience of many countries, the International Year of Quinoa was declared and today we are working together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to ensure that its virtues are known and to try to change the multinational model, which has made the right of the peoples of the world to feed themselves a business that seeks only profit and more profit.

We condemn the fact that those companies are now trying to ensure that the International Year of Quinoa fails, with the argument that the promotion of quinoa will lead to an increase in the price of that product and that it will not be accessible to the peoples who produce it. I would like to say to my brothers and sisters here that the production of quinoa in Bolivia is increasing year after year. There has been a 10 per cent increase in the harvest as compared to the previous year. It is not true that owing to an increase in the price of quinoa, there will be less and less quinoa consumption in the producing countries. Over the course of four years, the consumption of quinoa in Bolivia increased threefold, from 4,000 to 12,000 metric tons. The per capita consumption has grown from under 0.35 to 1.11 kilograms. Given how demonized and penalized the consumption of quinoa is, our domestic market for quinoa is small, but it is starting to grow.

Faced with the food crisis, it is vitally important to decolonize the conventional diet in order to nourish ourselves with all the foods that benefit humankind as a whole. The components of this product, which is so important for humankind, include the 20 amino acids, including the 10 essential ones for human development. It is a grain that meets the lysine requirements in a similar way to milk. That amino acid, among other things, helps to develop human brain cells and is rich in vitamins A, C, D, B1 and B2 and folic acid. It is high in minerals such as iron, calcium and phosphorus. If we were to make a comparison chart with other products — such as flour, soya and even milk — quinoa has more grams in every 100 grams of important elements: isoleucine, 5.2 grams; arginine, 7.9 grams; phenylalanine, 3.8 grams; histidine, 2.7 grams; leucine, 6.7 grams; lysine, 6.2 grams; methionine, 1.4 grams; threonine, 4.1 grams; tryptophan, 1.2 grams; valine, 4.6 grams; aspartic acid, 8.1 grams; glutamic acid, 14 grams; alanine, 4.4 grams; cysteine, 1.4 grams; glycine, 5.7 grams; proline, 4 grams; serine, 4.6 grams; and tyrosine, 3.1 grams. Scientific research by international organizations has demonstrated the nutritional value of quinoa.

Quinoa can alleviate hunger in the face of climate change. One of the main effects of climate change, which is caused by ruthless industrial capitalism, is that water is becoming increasingly scarce throughout the world. In a study entitled, "A Special Report on Water", published in May 2012 by the British weekly *The Economist*, warned that water was the new oil — a resource that is becoming increasingly costly and is the subject of growing demand. Aquifers are drying up; glaciers are melting; reserves are evaporating; and rivers no longer reach the seas. I could include my own experience in Bolivia: wells are drying up, and when we dig for water, the water is found at increasingly deeper levels and in smaller quantities.

According to studies, climate change threatens to worsen that situation. Each of us will have to consume less water if we want to ensure that famine, pestilence and mass immigration do not destroy the planet. The way things are going, wars will break out between countries over arguments about rights to water reserves and rivers. Water is already scarce in many parts of the world and is becoming an increasingly scarce resource.

The Earth's population is expressed on the magnitude of billions — 6 billion in 2000, 7 billion in 2010 and by 2050 there wi'l be 9 billion people on the planet. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the proportion of people living in countries with a chronic lack of water was 8 per cent, or 500 million people. It is estimated that by 2050 it will be 45 per cent, or 4 billion people. One billion people go to bed hungry because there is not enough water to grow food.

The increasing demand for water in the agricultural industry is created not only by the increasing number of mouths to be fed, but also by people's desire to consume more appetizing and interesting food. It takes twice as much water to produce 1 kilogram of peanuts than 1 kilogram of soybean flakes, almost four times as much to produce 1 kilogram of meat than 1 kilogram of chicken, and nearly five times as much to produce a glass of orange juice than a glass of tea. With more than 22 per cent of water used in industry and 8 per cent for domestic purposes, the demand for water quadrupled in the second half of the twentieth century.

Given that situation, to those here today and those listening throughout the world, I say that the production of quinoa is an excellent opportunity to satisfy the hunger in the world, using little water. Used to growing in Bolivia's arid mountain ranges for thousands of years and in the Andes, quinoa needs little water and is resistant to plagues and other weather phenomena. I can only reaffirm how, in my experience, quinoa resists drought and frost in my birthplace, Orinoco.

A quarter of Bolivia's municipalities produce quinoa. According to data and research, there are 1,300 varieties of quinoa. Bolivia is the world's primary producer, with 47 per cent of the global supply. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations confirms that quinoa can grow in the harshest conditions, withstanding temperatures from minus 8° C to 31° C. It can be sown from sea level up to an altitude of 4,000 metres, and it is resistant to drought and poor soil, as well as frost.

Lastly, ancestral understanding and the scientific knowledge of indigenous peoples are a policy for dealing with climate change and its consequences. States and private entities should ensure greater investment not in order to gain money but for the life of humankind. Faced with crises, we as politicians and Governments should stop politics from being deals and profit. Politics should become a service, sacrifice and greater commitment to the peoples of the world. We should implement complementary policies, and not competitiveness. I wish to say again that, whenever there is competition, there will always be injustice and poverty. The consumerist food policies of the capitalist system cannot ensure the survival or the dignity of humankind. I therefore reaffirm that quinoa has as much protein as milk and, as it is gluten-free, it helps the diet of those who are allergic.

Finally, I wish to say that in this International Year of Quinoa 2013 we should ask ourselves whether we are going to have the organic quinoa from the indigenous groups of the Andes or the fast food of the West. Members know that, unfortunately, with such consumerist policies, the fast food of the West is doing a great deal of harm to humankind. It is therefore important to encourage the production and fair trade of that product, which is so important to life and humankind.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for his statement.

As noted in the programme, the presidency has invited the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Mr. José Graziano da Silva, to participate in this meeting. Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly, without setting a precedent, to invite Mr. Graziano da Silva to make a statement at this meeting?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the decision just taken, I now give the floor to the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Mr. José Graziano da Silva.

Mr. Da Silva (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) (*spoke in Spanish*): Every human being has the right to adequate nutrition. That is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Today, however, there are 870 million people suffering from hunger. Hunger causes the death of children and affects the human development of the poorest and most vulnerable people. It results in loss of life through premature death and

disability. It is, in turn, the cause and the consequence of extreme poverty.

We cannot stand idly by when one in eight people in the world lives in hunger. We must acknowledge that reality, marshall our efforts and fight with passion, for the means to put an end to hunger exist. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is committed to helping to eliminate poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition. That requires the leadership and commitment of countries, adequate governance mechanisms and the support of the international community and civil society and private initiatives. Eradicating hunger is not a matter for a Government but for a society.

We are approaching the year 2015, which is the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The most recent figures of the FAO show us that nearly 50 countries have already reached the goal of halving the undernourished population. In order for all countries to reach that goal, we need additional momentum. Let us do that and use the situation to set ourselves an even more ambitious goal for beyond 2015, that is, to completely eradicate hunger from the face of the Earth, by heeding the appeal made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in launching the Zero Hunger Challenge at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

We are here to recruit a new ally in combating hunger and food insecurity — quinoa. It is an Andean grain that has been protected by the indigenous peoples of the Andes for thousands of years. It is a food with unique qualities, not only because of its essential amino acids and vitamins necessary for life but also due to its extraordinary capacity to adapt to different agricultural conditions. Quinoa can withstand extreme temperatures. It can grow at high altitudes, tolerate drought and grow in poor soil of high salinity. In addition to the Andean countries, quinoa can be grown in France, England, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Italy, the United States of America and Canada. There have been great seed yields in Kenya and Mali. Moreover, according to the FAO's initial assessments, it could be successfully cultivated from the Himalayas to the northern plains of India, in the countries of the Sahel, as well as in Yemen and in other arid regions of the world.

The International Year of Quinoa is not only an opportunity to stimulate the development of the crop at the global level, but it is also an opportunity to recognize the fact that the challenges of the modern world can be faced if we use the accumulated wisdom of ancestral peoples and small family farmers, who currently are the ones who are producing the majority of food crops, including quinoa. For that reason, it is a great pleasure for me to come before the Assembly today during the launch of the International Year of Quinoa with the certainty that, thanks to the coordinated efforts of Governments, development agencies, civil society and the private sector, we will be able to use the many benefits and move towards our common goal of achieving a hunger-free world — a world with zero hunger, as was proposed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon when he launched the Zero Hunger Challenge.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Rafael Roncagliolo Orbegoso, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Peru.

Mr. Roncagliolo Orbegoso (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am honoured and proud to represent Peru at this ceremony to launch the International Year of Quinoa. I welcome that initiative, which was presented by the Bolivian Government and approved by the General Assembly. The Government of President Ollanta Humala Tasso and Peru enthusiastically join in that initiative.

Quinoa, along with the potato, which is today consumed throughout the world, has formed the basis of the diet of the Andean peoples for more than 5,000 years. Tiwanaku, the Incan empire and the other pre-Hispanic cultures knew about both its nutritional properties as well as its medicinal and cosmetic properties. The nutritional value of quinoa allowed our forefathers to resist the tough conditions of the Conquest. The use of quinoa in their ceremonies and rituals led the conquistadors to associate them with supposed demonic influences. Its use was prohibited by the conquistadors, as were other Andean products.

Quinoa, as was mentioned already this morning, comes from the Andean highlands, specifically from the Lake Titicaca basin, but its cultivation extended, as did the Incan empire, from Pasto in Colombia to the south of Chile and to Jujuy and Salta in Argentina.

Today quinoa production is making a comeback in very different places throughout the world, as the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has just recalled. The launch of the International Year of Quinoa by the

United Nations is a revindication of the "golden grain", as we call quinoa. It is a recognition of the Andean peoples and, in particular, of Andean women, who have preserved that grain despite the prohibitions imposed by fear of the unknown.

We are making this claim for quinoa at the very moment when South America is becoming an important player on the international scene. Today quinoa represents the integration project of South American countries. Just as that tiny seed germinates in the Andes and opens up unimagined possibilities to meet the food needs at the global level, an unprecedented process of political convergence has been allowing the countries of South America to play an increasingly important role in the contemporary international system.

Bolivia is the world's main producer of quinoa, with Peru being the second, responsible for 42 per cent of global production. Peruvian exports of quinoa grew considerably between 2008 and 2012 — by more than 143 per cent. That was of course prompted by greater demand for the product due to its nutritional and gastronomic qualities. Last year Peru exported approximately $30 million in quinoa to 37 markets, including the United States, Canada, Australia, Germany, Israel and others.

For that reason, in tribute to its own indigenous cultures, Peru has played an active role in the International Coordination Committee for the International Year of Quinoa, along with Bolivia, Chile and Ecuador. Peru welcomes the appointment of the First Lady of our country, Ms. Nadine Heredia de Humala, as Special Ambassador for the International Year of Quinoa. That illustrates and confirms our commitment.

At the national level, we have set up working groups to develop policies and strategies that guarantee the right to food and nutrition for all, particularly for the most vulnerable population, as is the proper role for a Government — that of President Ollanta Humala Tasso — that is strongly aligned with the working class and committed to inclusive growth. We are also promoting a diet based on indigenous food, such as quinoa, tarwi, canihua and other foods.

In South America, we are designing tourist trails in which quinoa and other Andean grains serve as the basis for an experiential tourism. Similarly, we have planned a joint project with our partners in the Andean region that will include exchange visits of producers and industrialists of quinoa in order to ensure the growth of the crop. Our joint projects with brotherly countries in the region and the integration processes that South America is participating in should allow us to give enhanced value to the whole of our historical, cultural and natural heritage. We are proud of that heritage, and Peru promotes it actively within the Union of South American Nations and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and in the establishment of genuine South American civic identity.

The Year of Quinoa will give a major boost to those initiatives. At least 130,000 small producers in South America will benefit through increased sales and better prices for their harvests. Consumers will also benefit from healthful food at a reasonable price. Quinoa will be more available and will contribute to public food programmes and Governmental campaigns to promote healthier eating habits than junk food consumption by our people.

Because of its nutritional calories quinoa was and remains the golden grain. In the past, the golden grain was feared and banned by the conquistadores — the golden grain which today the United Nations and its Food and Agriculture Organization are vindicating. That vindication is the vindication of the Andean world. Quinoa is one of our most valued products, and we make it available to the international community in order to contribute to providing food and overcoming poverty throughout the world.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Ms. Silvana Vallejo, Vice-Minister for Rural Development of Ecuador.

Ms. Vallejo (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Some years ago, who could have imagined that today, on 20 February 2013, the world would turn its sights to a small grain of quinoa — a tiny grain but one with a nutritional, cultural and spiritual wealth that would reduce the problems of world hunger? That grain has a great similarity to my country, Ecuador, a small country in size but rich in social, cultural and spiritual wealth, enormous biodiversity and invaluable food wealth bequeathed to us by our ancestors, which we must care for and protect.

In Ecuador, we are working to consolidate knowledge generated nationally and globally to create new knowledge that enables us to produce, in a socially and environmentally sustainable manner, nutritionally complete products based on our wealth in culture and

food. Those products will allow us to ensure our food sovereignty and, with innovative knowledge, contribute to improving the global food supply, which is the overarching objective for our well-being.

Countless historians have described the production of the pre-Hispanic peoples of what is now Ecuador, the Cañaris and the Puruhaes, among others. Those peoples recognized the importance of that crop and considered it to be the food of the gods. Food acculturation by the Spanish sidelined that food so that it remained hidden for many years on small farms in the highlands of Ecuador, protected and cared for Andean women and men. Ecuador has protected approximately 235 genotypes of quinoa, which have been collected and studied by our scientists. That research allows us to know the cultivation and crop-rotation systems used by our ancestors when growing quinoa, respecting the fertility of Pachamama, the fertility of our Mother Earth.

It is thus our cultural heritage, the heritage of Ecuador, that was carefully protected and developed in those small family farms, which we now recognize as guardians of agro-biodiversity and producers of more than 60 per cent of the country's food. The tradition and the knowledge gained over the years with respect to growing quinoa mean that we face the challenge of finding well-being for the rural sector while respecting cultures, traditions and the environment, and dealing with the poverty and malnutrition that affects mainly the Ecuadorian rural sector through concrete and innovative actions.

Meeting the challenge involves strengthening public policies at home aimed at boosting rural household income with technologies that minimize the environmental and social impact of production and that allow the development of products with high added value by associative rural enterprises for domestic and international consumers; strengthening farmers' organizations so that the necessary social processes and technological resources are empowered to achieve good rural living; promoting science and knowledge to enable the development of innovative technologies and practices while recognizing the ancestral knowledge also referred to by previous speakers; and strengthening food sovereignty, boosting the consumption of healthful, nutritious and culturally appropriate foods.

Internationally, in July 2013, Ecuador will be the seat of the fourth World Congress of Quinoa — the first symposium on Andean grains to take place in our northern province of Imbabura, which is the cradle of the ancient peoples who were quinoa producers, as well as a place chosen for one of the largest investments ever made in science and technology by the national Government. We will create there a city of knowledge called Yachay.

Ecuador invites the General Assembly to discover through quinoa its people, its history, its food and environmental heritage, its scientific heritage and work aimed at generating knowledge for innovation in the production, processing and consumption of complete, varied and cultural food products that are environmentally sustainable and that contribute to food sovereignty and good living for rural farm families throughout the world, whose well-being we have selected as our development model.

I invite the Assembly to discover Ecuador in the International Year of Quinoa.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Fiji, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Thomson (Fiji): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We note with appreciation the sentiments echoed in the statements this morning to launch of the International Year of Quinoa. The year 2013 has been declared International Year of Quinoa in recognition of the indigenous peoples of the Andes, who, thanks to their traditional knowledge and living practices, have maintained, controlled, protected and preserved quinoa as a food for present and future generations.

Quinoa is the only plant food that contains all the essential amino acids, vitamins and trace elements and is also gluten-free. Moreover, the crop is extraordinarily adaptable to different agro-ecological zones, being grown in areas with relative humidity from 40 per cent to 88 per cent, from sea level to 4,000 metres and in temperatures from minus 8° C to 38° C. It is a water-efficient crop and is tolerant and resistant to a lack of soil moisture.

The Group of 77 views the launch of the International Year of Quinoa as constituting a first step in an ongoing process to focus world attention on quinoa's important role. Quinoa's biodiversity and nutritional value make it central to providing food security and nutrition and to poverty eradication, in support of the achievement of

the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. We expect all initiatives to be implemented during the International Year of Quinoa and the proposed programmes and actions in the master plan to be a catalyst to enable the exchange of information and to start generating medium- and long-term programmes and projects for the sustainable development of the cultivation of quinoa nationally and globally.

The Group of 77 takes due note of the proposed themes of the high-level panel on food security and nutrition during this global launch of the International Year of Quinoa. We wish to recall and highlight the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which re-establishes the right of everyone to have access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger.

The world's food production and distribution situation presents challenges of great magnitude to the four pillars of food security, namely, availability, access, consumption and biological utilization. In that context, quinoa constitutes a strategic crop with the potential to contribute to food security and sovereignty due to its inherent qualities. We note its nutritional quality, genetic variability, adaptability to adverse climate and soil conditions and low production cost. The cultivation of quinoa provides an alternative for countries with limited food production that would otherwise be forced to import food or to receive food aid.

The Group reiterates that, in the light of the extensive research carried out to date, quinoa is one of the few crops that develop without much difficulty in extreme climate and soil conditions. Its great adaptability to climate variability and its efficient use of water make quinoa an excellent alternative crop in the face of climate change, which is altering the agricultural calendar and causing ever more extreme temperatures.

The Group of 77 emphasizes the urgent need to increase efforts at the national, regional and international levels to address food security and agriculture development as an integral part of the international development agenda. In that connection, we call for an enhanced and lasting international partnership and cooperation among public, non-governmental and private stakeholders in the quinoa crop. We stress the need for sustained funding and increased targeted investment to enhance world food production. We call for new and additional financial resources from all sources to achieve sustainable agriculture development and food security.

It would be remiss of the Group not to take advantage of this occasion to re-emphasize that the agricultural subsidies and other trade distortions of developed countries have severely harmed the agricultural sector in developing countries. They have limited the ability of that key sector to contribute meaningfully to poverty eradication, rural development and sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth. We therefore again urge developed countries to demonstrate the necessary flexibility and political will to meaningfully address those key concerns of developing countries.

In conclusion, the Group wishes to acknowledge specifically the presence of the Special Ambassadors for the International Year of Quinoa, His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of Bolivia, and Her Excellency Ms. Nadine Heredia de Humala, First Lady of Peru. It is our desire to see quinoa — "a future sown thousands of years ago" — recognized and accepted throughout the world as a natural food resource with a vital role in food security, nutrition and the eradication of poverty, in support of the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba, who will speak on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba has the great honour to speak on behalf of the 33 member States that make up the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). We affectionately greet His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the brotherly people of Bolivia, who honours us with his presence at this important event. We would also like to extend a warm welcome to Ms. Nadine Heredia de Humala, First Lady of Peru, who is with us today.

We convey the appreciation of the Heads of State and Government of the Latin America and the Caribbean States for resolution 66/221, which declared 2013 the International Year of Quinoa, at the summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held on 27 and 28 January in Chile. In the resolution, the General Assembly encouraged all Member States,

the organizations of the United Nations system and all other relevant stakeholders to take advantage of the International Year in order to promote the sustainable use of quinoa and the traditional knowledge of the Andean and other indigenous peoples and to share good practices on implementing activities during the Year, as set out in the master plan, entitled "A future sown thousands of years ago".

At the same time, we welcome with great enthusiasm at the decision of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to appoint His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and Ms. Nadine Heredia de Humala, First Lady of Peru, as its Special Ambassadors for the International Year of Quinoa.

Given its high nutritional value, the growing of quinoa can play a very important role in achieving food and nutrition security and in eradicating poverty and hunger at the global level. Indigenous peoples in our region, through their traditional knowledge and practices based on the philosophy of living well in harmony with nature, have maintained, managed, protected and preserved quinoa in its natural state. That has enabled those peoples, through their ancestral wisdom and heritage, to introduce today to the international community a sustainable and viable alternative to contribute to the fight against hunger throughout the world.

The Governments and peoples of CELAC would like to reiterate our commitment to promoting the cultivation of traditional food crops, of which quinoa is an example, and the necessity and importance of spreading the nutritional qualities of traditional foods worldwide by supporting research and development programmes on specific traditional food crops, including quinoa cultivation, as a viable alternative for alleviating the hunger and poverty of the millions of people worldwide who suffer from those scourges.

Speaking now in my national capacity, allow me first of all to convey the warmest greetings of the Cuban people and authorities to His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. It is an honour for us to have him with us at this important event, which is a magnificent contribution to the fight against malnutrition and hunger worldwide. Our greetings also go to Ms. Nadine Heredia de Humala and the other ministers with us.

There are more than 870 million people suffering from malnutrition, of whom 850 million are men, women and children living in developing countries. Food is not just a vital need: more than anything else it is a human right for individuals and peoples. The food crisis, which is a chronic scourge that goes hand in hand with the current international order, has been worsened by the negative effects of that global systemic crisis, with its economic, financial and energy drawbacks, coupled with the devastating effects of climate change and the policies of some developed countries to reserve significant quantities of grains and cereals for the production of biofuels.

The runaway increase in food prices has prevented a growing number of people from realizing their right to food. The heart of that problem lies in the unfair distribution of wealth at the global level and the growing trend towards the concentration and monopolization of the production and distribution of foods and agricultural products. There will be no solution as long as the large multinational food companies of the agro-food industry control the prices, technologies, standards, certifications, distribution channels and sources of financing for the global production of food.

Cuba welcomes the initiative led by President Evo Morales Ayma to establish 2013 as the International Year of Quinoa. That cereal has been catalogued by the FAO as one of the promising crops for humankind not only because of its beneficial properties and numerous uses, but also because it is a viable alternative to meeting the major problems of nutrition that our planet faces. The ancestral knowledge and culture of the indigenous Andean peoples make an effective and sustainable contribution to resolving a serious problem whose root cause is based on the selfishness, waste and consumerism imposed by the main centres of power of the global capitalist system. We hope that the entire international community, including developed countries, will provide the necessary support to this laudable initiative, which can help to save millions of individuals from hunger.

We thank and wish the greatest success to President Evo Morales Ayma and Ms. Heredia de Humala and all the other eminent persons who have supported this initiative in favour of humankind. We reiterate the full support of Cuba's Government and people.

Mrs. Ribeiro Viotti (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to welcome President Evo

Morales Ayma and congratulate him on his initiative to declare 2013 as the International Year of Quinoa.

(*spoke in English*)

As pointed out by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), quinoa, which is of Andean origin, is recognized and accepted around the world as a natural food resource with high nutritional value. Moreover, the crop is remarkably adaptable, not only to different agro-ecological regions but also to different socioeconomic contexts, as highlighted by the successful coexistence of both traditional and industrial methods of production. For all those reasons, the contribution of quinoa to health and food and nutrition security and sustainable development for present and future generations is being increasingly acknowledged.

In that regard, we commend the appointment of President Morales Ayma and Ms. Nadine Heredia de Humala, First Lady of Peru, as FAO Special Ambassadors for the International Year of Quinoa. The ever-growing attention to quinoa also demonstrates a recognition of the value of the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples in the Americas originally cultivated many important food staples that formed the basis of our diets today, such as maize, cassava and potato. Brazil has always stressed the importance of protecting traditional knowledge, which is an essential component of the lifestyles of indigenous communities and makes an invaluable contribution to all our societies.

Brazil is fully committed to working towards a world free from hunger. Yet we remain aware that, in spite of some progress, much remains to be done. The recent food crisis has exposed the limits of the current systems and institutions, including those that govern the world food trade, to respond to the needs of poor people affected by substantial shocks. Brazil reaffirms that access to safe and nutritious food is a human right. The implementation of our commitments to realize the human right to food for all should be informed by the Voluntary Guidelines on the right to food.

Brazil would like to emphasize the central role of the FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme as the primary bodies of the United Nations family for promoting agricultural development and food security. Other institutions and initiatives also play an important complementary role that is coordinated by the Rome-based bodies, including working through the Committee on World Food Security. Brazil welcomes the progress made towards the implementation of the reform agreed in 2009, which is currently being implemented and aims at improving the Committee on Food Security as the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for a broad range of committed stakeholders to work together on food security.

We would like to conclude by stressing the importance of this International Year for raising awareness about a crop that can make a decisive contribution to achieving sustainable development and fulfilling the right to food and nutritional security for all.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): On 1 February, the countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) officially joined the launch of the International Year of Quinoa, and we asserted that quinoa played an important role in ensuring food and nutrition security, which we need and deserve. On that occasion, we reaffirmed the commitment of CELAC countries to participate in and contribute to the Year's activities while raising awareness of the nutritional qualities of that essential food.

We therefore align ourselves with what was said by the Ambassador of Cuba on behalf of CELAC, as well as by the Ambassador of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Quinoa, a unique vegetable food that contains all the essential amino acids and which is eaten by men and women of the Andes, can grow in extreme temperatures from -8° C to 38° C, which represents a significant contribution to humankind and the more than 800 million people who suffer from hunger, as well as to a world that faces the challenge of increasing the production of quality food to feed and nourish the populations of the world in a very difficult and complex context of climate change and food insecurity.

From the outset, the Argentine Republic, our President and the people of Argentina strongly supported the declaration of the International Year of Quinoa. In that regard, I would like to point to the establishment of a coordinating committee for the International Year of Quinoa, on which we have the honour to serve as a member.

Allow me to share with the Assembly a brief reflection as an Andean woman from Argentina. The history of quinoa can also be found in the centuries of colonial and neocolonial injustice, which tried without success to suppress the freedom and silence the culture of our peoples. In addition to feeding and nourishing, quinoa serves to illustrate and warn us against the negative and tragic consequences that humankind has suffered, and could suffer again, whenever cultural ambitions, political decisions and scientific paradigms that exclude and discriminate are established on the basis of overriding power as the only model of development in the name of a supposed civilizing superiority. While the peoples of the Andes had discovered the nutritional value of the quinoa grain more than 8,000 years ago, in 1551, during the period of colonialist concealment in Latin America, Pedro de Valdivia informed Emperor Charles I that "indians" in the Andean region were sowing corn, potatoes and something called quinoa. Knowledgeable people of that period made drawings of quinoa aboard their ships, erroneously depicting it as amaranth, which, as those who are familiar with it know, is a plant of low nutritional value found on Iberian peninsula. They therefore said that it had no value at all but that, if our native men and women ate it, it should be fed to animals in case they could get some benefit from it. But that was not the end, as the President of Bolivia said. Quinoa has gone from being useless to being inconvenient, if not from inconvenience to irreverence. That occurred once its cultivation was prohibited. Once its use was noted in the religious rituals of our Andean peoples, the grain became a sign of heresy and, therefore, just as was the case with our brothers, it had to be done away with.

Nevertheless, persistent and patient, our peoples of the high Andean regions, with its agriculture based on family farms and community solidarity, continued to produce quinoa for women's hands to knead into bread for the poor and to produce the soft drink called chicha for people thirsting for equality. Not long ago, when NASA, as part of its Controlled Ecological Life Support System project, officially recognized quinoa as a superfood that was found from Bolivia to Peru and from Colombia to Ecuador, Chile and Argentina, thousands and thousands of small farmers who cultivated that mother cereal, selflessly and without arrogance, were not surprised by the news. As then, we know that it is a question of our identity; that is why we know what quinoa is all about.

We would like to thank the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization for the support in contributing to ensure that all countries and peoples in their cultural diversity are at a common table for a humankind that is starving for justice and equality. It is not a question of quinoa against corn or corn against rice or rice against baobab. It is not one culture against another. We, the free peoples of the world, are determined to combat speculation in the food market and to eliminate the agricultural food subsidies of developed countries that distort the market and affect the development of developing countries. We are the countries of the world and we will defend all cultures and protect biodiversity.

In conclusion, in the Aymara language of our beloved brother the President of Bolivia, the word *pachacuti* means "turning point". As the poet says, the march of time unfolds and rescues beneficial traditions, making sure that the stones speak as the Andean mountains spoke. A time of change is not for looking on the past with nostalgia, but to learn to look at the present in a different way, as a future sown thousands of years ago.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): India is privileged to participate in today's global launch of the International Year of Quinoa 2013. We are equally privileged and honoured by the presence among us of His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, who has been the guiding spirit behind the initiative. We also deeply value the presence of Her Excellency Ms. Nadine Heredia de Humala, First Lady of Peru; His Excellency Mr. Rafael Roncagliolo Orbegoso, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru; Her Excellency Ms. Silvana Vallejo, Vice-Minister for Rural Development of Ecuador; and His Excellency Mr. José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Today's gathering here is testimony to the global recognition of quinoa, its growing popularity across continents and its potential and possibilities for the future.

In 2011, the Assembly adopted a resolution to celebrate 2013 as the International Year of Quinoa (resolution 66/221). My delegation lent its full support to that initiative. Today, as we gather here to celebrate quinoa, the golden grain of the Andes, let us remind ourselves of its unique qualities as a food source, a

cultural value and a versatile agricultural practice. In today's world, vulnerable to climate change, we are constantly challenged by our quest for food security. Quinoa offers a sustainable, healthful and nutritive dietary option.

It is the only plant food that contains all essential amino acids, vitamins and trace elements and, at the same time, is gluten-free. Its exceptionally high amino acid content enriches it with unique therapeutic properties — qualities that make it a superior nutritional option over other grains that form part of our daily food habits. As a rich source of protein, it holds immense nutritional and health value for populations in developing countries, especially those who depend upon legumes for their daily protein intake. With more than 1 billion people worldwide suffering from malnutrition, almost all of whom are in developing countries, what more affordable way is there than to promote protein- and vitamin-rich quinoa to tackle the challenge.

Quinoa is a highly adaptive crop that can grow in various agro-climatic zones. In its home in the Andean region, more than 3,000 genetically diverse varieties of quinoa are grown on the coast, in the alluvial plains, in the valleys and in the higher reaches of the mountains.

Today, quinoa's agronomic versatility has allowed it to travel far and wide. Farms in Asia, Europe and Africa are experimenting with quinoa production. Those efforts have met with appreciable success. In my country, quinoa cultivation is under trial in the Himalayan region and in the plains of northern India. Amaranth, a crop native also to the Americas with similar properties to quinoa, which grows widely in India, makes the trials more than promising.

With low input cost, quinoa production is highly cost-effective. As such, its potential to tackle hunger, disease and poverty and to meet the Millennium Development Goals in an affordable manner is truly immense. We look forward to the initiatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to promote and popularize quinoa, especially in those parts of the world where we are still a long way behind in providing people's basic needs.

Given its environmental adaptability and our need to identify crops that can best adjust to the impact of climate change, quinoa offers several possibilities for adaptation strategies. It can contribute to food and nutrition security in both developed and developing countries.

We must make greater use of science and technology to promote and propagate quinoa. At the same time, we must be willing to share its fruits for the greater public good. We fully appreciate the work being done by the FAO on that score and pledge India's committed support to its initiatives.

Feeding our people and providing them with sustenance is a challenge that we in developing countries grapple with daily. My Government's commitment to providing food security to every citizen of India remains resolute and unflinching. We are in the process of considering a food security bill that would guarantee subsidized grains to more than 600 million people in India, with special provisions for women and children.

For many of us here, the success of quinoa symbolizes the collective hope that we pin on sustainably harnessing our biodiversity resources to meet the needs of our present and future generations. It equally reinforces our faith in traditional knowledge and practices, as we search our daily lives for sustainable solutions.

In October 2012, India successfully hosted the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. At the meeting, we pledged to delve deep into our forests and wild fields and our countless but constrained biotic species to find new solutions to food security and sustainable livelihoods. We hope that our efforts to promote quinoa will go a long way in that common endeavour.

Quinoa is more than a crop. It represents the celebrated spirit of the Andean civilizations and their proud people, who have preserved their traditional knowledge and practices and taught us to how to live in harmony with nature. For centuries and over countless generations, they have preserved their wisdom and bequeathed to us their richness, colour and diversity of life. In today's world, as we strive to balance growth with social equity and environmental sustainability, they are our guiding lights.

President Morales Ayma, the Andes, the Andean people and the indigenous civilizations of the new world hold a special place in our hearts in India. Over centuries of intermingling, our two lands have exchanged ideas, values, flora and fauna. While they added potatoes, tomatoes, maize, papaya and more to our cuisine, we gave them coconut, sugarcane and mango. Now they give us and the world quinoa.

We deeply appreciate and support the plans drawn up by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to promote quinoa as part of the International Year programme and hope that such efforts will continue much beyond. We wish President Morales Ayma and Ms. Nadine Heredia de Humala every success as FAO Special Ambassadors for the International Year of Quinoa as they take the initiative forward. India remains committed to working with the global community to make the International Year of Quinoa a success.

Ms. King (Australia): The designation of this year as the International Year of Quinoa is an important event in the ongoing global fight against food insecurity and malnutrition. Australia supported the initiative from the beginning for that reason.

We congratulate the Government of Bolivia and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on their commitment to bringing the world's attention to the important role that quinoa can and must have in efforts to fight food insecurity. We commend the Governments of Peru and Ecuador for their very strong support. We also extend our congratulations to the President of Bolivia and the First Lady of Peru on their appointments as FAO Special Ambassadors for the International Year of Quinoa.

My own country, Australia, is a proud supporter of innovation in agriculture. We are committed to agricultural research and development, not just for domestic purposes but with the goal of helping to reduce poverty and of promoting food security and nutrition in developing countries. We do that through our bilateral aid programme, our active membership of the Commonwealth of Nations and the Group of 20. The establishment of the Australian International Food Security Centre in Australia and Kenya last year is yet another tangible expression of our ongoing commitment to strengthening research and cooperation in that area.

We all know that knowledge is not the exclusive domain of the scientist in the laboratory. The President of Bolivia eloquently made that point when he noted that quinoa has been grown in the Andean region for 7,000 years. We all have much to learn from the indigenous peoples of the world. We applaud the focus of the International Year of Quinoa in the respect that it accords to the knowledge and resilience strategies of indigenous peoples.

In a world besieged by drought and floods, with the urgent need to mitigate the impact of climate change, we must be innovative and must share knowledge and experience with one another.

Feeding the world's population of 9 billion people by 2050 will require an estimated 70 per cent increase in global food production and an almost 100 per cent increase in food production in developing countries. The rationale for increasing investment in agriculture is clear. While that may present us all with a huge challenge, it is not impossible as long as we take immediate and collective action. The International Year of Quinoa is an excellent example of such action. The Australian Government is committed to working with others to ensure that it is a success.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile is grateful for the convening of this meeting of the General Assembly to officially launch the International Year of Quinoa at the United Nations. We welcome the presence today of high-ranking officials from Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador and the United Nations system.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Cuba and Fiji on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Group of 77 and China, respectively.

The subject of agricultural development, food security and nutrition has become increasingly important to the work here at Headquarters, and rightly so. The numbers are well known: approximately 870 million people live with chronic malnutrition, most of them in developing countries, where an estimated 850 million, almost 15 per cent of the world's population, are malnourished. Only a few days ago the Second Committee and the Economic and Social Council held a special joint event on food security and nutrition. On that occasion two elements were repeatedly highlighted, that is, the importance of giving greater attention to the issue of nutrition and the impact of climate change on food security and agricultural development.

In that context, the launch of the International Year of Quinoa is even more relevant. As has been pointed out, quinoa — which has been preserved through the traditional knowledge and practices of the indigenous peoples of the Andes region — has high nutritional value, is rich in proteins and amino acids, and is extraordinarily adaptable to different soils, climates and altitudes. Its cultivation uses water efficiently, and it is tolerant of dry soil. The International Year

provides a unique opportunity to widely publicize this food and its properties, to support programmes that advance research and development for this crop and to promote its cultivation and consumption. The master plan for celebrating the International Year of Quinoa, to be implemented at the local, national and international levels, is a tool with enormous potential for achieving those goals, which we hope can rely on broad and essential support from the entire international community.

As a member of the International Committee for the Celebration of the International Year of Quinoa, together with Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru, we reiterate our readiness to continue to work to ensure that this International Year is a catalyst for improving our peoples' life and nutrition. We would like to add our voice to the welcome given in the Hall to His Excellency the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the First Lady of Peru as Food and Agriculture Organization Special Ambassadors for the International Year of Quinoa.

Before concluding, I would like to reflect on the broader theme of agricultural development, food security and nutrition, to which quinoa has the potential to make a great contribution. We firmly believe that the best way of achieving food security is by reducing poverty, strengthening growth and consolidating political and social stability. Food security is closely linked to the creation of job and income opportunities, which depends significantly on economic growth and social policies designed to provide adequate social protection mechanisms. Improving the availability of the products and job and income opportunities associated with more development, along with adequate social safety nets, will enable us to ensure food security for our peoples. In that context, we firmly believe that international trade plays a fundamental role in achieving food security, providing populations with both the physical access to food necessary for a balanced diet and economic access, through job and income opportunities.

It is crucial that we overcome the deadlock in the Doha Round and the agricultural protectionism that still persists. A multilateral, universal system of trade based on clear, equitable and non-discriminatory standards will promote agricultural and rural development in developing countries and contribute to global food security.

Mr. Ragaglini (Italy): Italy is pleased to participate in this plenary meeting of the General Assembly and to join in the celebration of the launch of the International Year of Quinoa. We welcome the presence here today of the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, and recognize his leading role in this initiative. We would also like to congratulate him and the First Lady of Peru, Ms. Nadine Heredia de Humala, on their appointments as Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Special Ambassadors for the International Year of Quinoa.

Italy values the dialogue being held at the United Nations on the role that natural foods such as quinoa can play in providing an adequate standard of nutrition, promoting food security, eradicating poverty, preserving biodiversity and maintaining cultural traditions. The availability of genuinely high-quality agricultural foodstuffs is among society's fundamental needs. Ensuring healthful and high-quality nutrition helps to fight hunger and malnutrition, reduce child mortality, prevent non-communicable diseases and eradicate pandemic diseases. The production and consumption of quality food is closely intertwined with the farming traditions of local communities, developed over centuries, and with the goal of sustainable land management.

High-quality food also enhances the values of a cultural and ethnic heritage, as expressed in culinary traditions. A culture of food is an integral part of Italy's history. At the same time, food security and nutrition have traditionally been high priorities for our foreign policy and cooperation in development activity. For that reason we welcomed the recent initiative of the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee to hold a joint special event on food security and nutrition.

Thanks to the presence in Rome of the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, it is the city where these global issues are most intensely debated at the multilateral level. I would like to take this opportunity to note that Italy is preparing to host the 2015 World Expo in Milan, with the theme of "Feeding the planet. Energy for life". The exhibition will provide an extraordinary platform on which to display tradition, creativity and innovation in the food sector, as well as to promote research, technology and business practices along the entire supply chain

for improving the nutritional value, conservation and distribution of food. To date, the Milan Expo expects more than 120 confirmed international participants, including the United Nations, with the FAO as its lead organization.

We believe that the International Year of Quinoa 2013, together with other initiatives pertaining to food security and nutrition, such as Scaling Up Nutrition and the Zero Hunger Challenge, may provide important synergies with the theme of the 2015 World Expo. We also see many points of contact between the theme of the Expo and the ongoing processes on sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda. Italy stands ready to collaborate with the United Nations and its agencies, funds and programmes and with all Member States, including the main promoters of the International Year of Quinoa, to fully exploit those opportunities.

Let me conclude by welcoming again the launch of the International Year of Quinoa and by expressing our best wishes for its successful implementation.

Ms. Lee (New Zealand): With close to 1 billion people suffering from malnutrition, including one third of all children in the developing world, and with rapid population growth, soaring food prices and climate change threatening to intensify those challenges, the imperative to identify viable options for sustainable agricultural production and food security, particularly in the developing world, has never been greater. New Zealand was therefore pleased to lend its support to the initiative instigated under the leadership of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to convene today's meeting to mark the launch of the International Year of Quinoa.

Sometimes the path to resolving the challenges of the future lies through the past, and sometimes the key to unlocking contemporary innovation is found in the most ancient wisdom. New Zealand pays tribute to the role played by the Andean indigenous people, the original agricultural innovators and the living embodiment of the principles of sustainable development, in fostering and preserving quinoa as a versatile and highly nutritious food source for present and future generations.

Today's launch of the International Year of Quinoa highlights the exceptional nutritional and agricultural benefits of the qualities of the golden grain. But it also underlines the broader need to consider innovative ways in which agricultural production and productivity can be sustainably increased to meet growing global demand and in which food security and nutrition might be enhanced for the one in seven members of the global community who currently go hungry.

There is much that we can learn from each other as we seek to meet those challenges. The versatility and high nutritional value of quinoa make it a promising option for many communities, particularly for those that do not have ready access to alternative protein sources.

Much more can and must be done to achieve our shared goal of eliminating hunger and malnutrition. As others have said before me today, we need fairer global rules for trade in agricultural products to ensure that farmers in developing countries can compete on a level playing field. We need improved access by such farmers to credit and to relevant information and technology. We need investment in relevant infrastructure and in enhanced distribution systems. And we need to develop agricultural production systems resilient enough to withstand the impacts of climate change.

The challenge is vast, but we are very pleased to be associated with today's launch, which we hope can make a practical contribution to meeting that challenge over the coming year and beyond.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and by the representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, we want to congratulate our brother and the leader of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, President Evo Morales Ayma, who has undeniably contributed, with his prophetic voice, to the care and love needed by Mother Earth, which is the only way to preserve humankind. Similarly, we pay tribute to the First Lady of the Republic of Peru, Ms. Nadine Heredia de Humala, and Mr. José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Scientific evidence confirms that quinoa is not only a natural food with high nutritional value, it also represents a significant contribution to achieving food security and nutrition. When considering the launch of the International Year of Quinoa, 2013, we realize that

we are thinking of the 870 million people throughout the world who are suffering from hunger. According to the FAO, one out of every eight people goes to bed hungry every night. Therefore, we recognize that humankind's challenge to eradicate hunger and poverty remains increasingly urgent. We cannot stand idly by in the face of that alarming reality. We are also concerned by, and we need to prepare ourselves even more for, the negative impacts of climate change, drought and the constant El Niño and La Niña phenomena. Meanwhile, we continue with the same pillaging model of production and consumption, which is damaging our common home, Mother Earth, and all its gifts, which enable our survival as the human species.

Given those challenging circumstances, it is crucial to find solutions and consider new proposals. The launch of the International Year of Quinoa is exactly that — a gift from Mother Earth. The indigenous Andean peoples have made quinoa into an alternative, strategic and powerful food that can contribute to food and nutrition sovereignty and security for humankind, as well as improve the quality of life of our peoples and end the hunger of the 870 million people who go hungry every day. We just have to use the knowledge of the indigenous Andean peoples and make quinoa part of our daily diets, as was done with Mesoamerican corn, which is also a gift from Mother Earth and which has become a fundamental component of the global diet.

According to FAO reports, quinoa contains extraordinary characteristics of adaptability to various ecological and weather conditions. Similarly, quinoa production makes it possible to preserve the traditional agricultural production system while using methods that respect the environment and protect Mother Earth and human health. Therefore, we must increase awareness about the use of quinoa to fight hunger.

In order to achieve a zero-hunger world, we also need to encourage microcredit; the economic empowerment of the poorest and women; and the participation of small and medium-sized businesses under a community- and family-based economy, including the participation of community-based organizations. We also need to support the efforts of our Governments to eradicate poverty and hunger. That is the experience we are living through in our country, and we can say we are doing it steadily and with certain success. We would like to thank Director-General Graziano da Silva and to acknowledge what the FAO is doing to support our President and people. We thank him and the FAO for the progress that Nicaragua has made in eradicating poverty.

As daughters and sons of corn, we welcome and pay tribute to the indigenous people of the Andes and their quinoa.

Mr. De Vega (Philippines): It is an honour for the people and Government of the Republic of the Philippines to extend our warmest greetings and sincere congratulations to the people and Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and to all quinoa-producing countries on today's global launch of the International Year of Quinoa, 2013.

The Philippines aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, to which I will add a brief statement of our own.

As we approach the 2015 deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, it remains imperative that the world continue to tackle the biggest issues of the day, including poverty eradication and food security. In developed and developing countries alike, many are searching for new solutions and discoveries to help enhance food security and people's health. Yet, in truth, there may be no need to uncover such magic solutions when our peoples are already cultivating healthful foods, and all that is needed is to promote awareness of them. Therefore, we now devote our attention to the important nutritional and health value of quinoa.

In the Philippines' view, the promotion of quinoa is in itself a demonstration of how a global undertaking involving a food crop can promote and integrate the three pillars of sustainable development. This International Year should improve the livelihoods of many indigenous farmers in Bolivia and other parts of the Americas and around the world, and thus we are advancing the economic pillar. We help preserve and honour their traditional knowledge and practices and promote a crop with great health benefits for consumers, and thus we advance the social pillar. And we enhance the development of a sustainable agricultural practice that is in harmony with nature, and thus we promote the environmental pillar.

President Morales Ayma mentioned the difficulty of getting the resolution to launch this event adopted (resolution 66/221). Today also gives us an opportunity to remind our friends around the world that in 2011, at

the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, another resolution on an International Year was adopted under the agenda item of agricultural development and food security. That was resolution 66/222, introduced by the Philippines, declaring 2014 the International Year of Family Farming. We were honoured to count Bolivia, Peru and many other countries that sponsored the resolution on the International Year of Quinoa among the sponsors of our own resolution, and we thank them again for their support.

Indeed, the quinoa crop and the concept of family farming are mutually complementary in that their promotion is intended to support the same beneficiaries. The Philippines aims to support the special needs of smallholder farming, including women farmers. Many of the producers of quinoa in the Andes and elsewhere undoubtedly fall into the same category. The successful implementation of the International Year of Quinoa should therefore pave the way, we hope, for similar success with the International Year of Family Farming 2014. And so in much the same way that today we welcome the global launch of the International Year of Quinoa for 2013, we look forward to welcoming the Assembly to what we hope will be a similarly successful event when we launch the International Year of Family Farming next year.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

Once again, we extend to our friends from the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Republic of Peru, the Republic of Ecuador and other quinoa-producing countries our sincere congratulations and best wishes for the celebration of the International Year of Quinoa. Before concluding, I hope that we can share this food together at a common table.

(*spoke in English*)

We greatly appreciate the offering of these delicious samples of quinoa.

Mr. Nofukuka (South Africa): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

I would like to thank the President for organizing this meeting to mark the global launch of the International Year of Quinoa, 2013.

We owe gratitude to the diverse cultural values that over the years have preserved indigenous traditional knowledge and protected quinoa in its natural form, so that we will be able to use it as nutritious food for generations to come. We believe that quinoa's nutritional value can benefit our societies and that it can be used to address the challenges of poverty eradication and food security that we face.

It is clear that most developing countries will not be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially those targeting poverty and hunger. In that regard, we believe that this meeting should help accelerate progress, further strengthen cooperation and create action-oriented strategies for improving nutrition, particularly for women and children, and for the overall attainment of the MDGs by 2015. In that context, financial and technical resources should be accessible, coordinated and predictable in order to accelerate efforts towards ensuring the practical realization of the right to food. Moreover, the role of specialized United Nations agencies such as the World Intellectual Property Organization and their contribution towards the development agenda are critical for attaining the MDGs, especially in the context of MDG 8, on the global partnership for development.

We commend the efforts of United Nations agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme, the World Food Programme, UNICEF and partners, as well as the substantive contribution that has been made by the private sector and civil society, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, in taking all possible steps to address the challenges of poverty and hunger. We also commend the training of unskilled workers, which has made a difference as such workers have become self-sustaining, and therefore also able to make a positive contribution to the economic growth of their countries. Such training of unskilled workers is essential for rural development.

According to the FAO, our planet is capable of producing enough food to feed everyone, worldwide. But people are still suffering from serious malnutrition, and UNICEF has indicated that every year one third of all children die before reaching the age of 5, due to hunger-related illnesses. That situation could have been avoided. We acknowledge the progress made in combating extreme poverty and hunger worldwide. However, the situation in developing countries is severe and requires attention, as the number of people living in poverty is increasing, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The situation is made worse by the devastating

impact of climate change and the food crisis, among other things.

Let me remind the Assembly of our collective responsibility to ensure that every human being has the right to access safe, affordable and nutritious food as part of the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger. We should ask ourselves how far we have gone in ensuring that such freedoms and rights are promoted and protected so that they can be enjoyed by everyone, as guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the Right to Development.

We will not win the battle against extreme poverty and hunger unless we take the necessary measures to address the root causes. In that regard, we understand that successful poverty-reduction strategies include four strategies.

First, with regard to employment creation and decent work, targeting vulnerable youth and women, an environment conducive to promoting entrepreneurship is vital, particularly in addressing youth unemployment. Secondly, we must have access to education, science and technology, health care, safe drinking water and sanitation. Thirdly, there must be a provision of social-protection floors to poor societies. Fourthly, we must support agricultural and rural development and food production by supporting small-scale irrigation and water management technologies to reduce vulnerability to droughts.

We need to ensure the elimination of protectionism on agricultural products that jeopardize equitable market access for developing States, with its resulting impact on food security.

Increasing global climate-change events continue to have a huge impact on, and cost for, developing countries. It is our wish that we build on the gains accrued from United Nations conferences on climate change in order to join hands to save the planet, especially small island developing States and other countries at risk, and to preserve agrobiodiversity. International cooperation could assist developing countries in protecting and preserving biodiversity.

In conclusion, in order to ensure the practical realization of the right to food, this debate should be translated into a tangible outcome. We therefore recommend that the Secretary-General coordinates with regional bodies, such as the African Union, to ensure the distribution of quinoa species so that all countries may realize its benefit as a nutritious crop. In the context of sharing best practices, we recommend the furtherance of research, both national and international levels, on the adaptation of quinoa.

Let us strengthen our global partnership for sustainable development and take every necessary step to achieve the eradication of poverty and hunger, especially in Africa. That challenge requires fulfilling our collective responsibilities.

Mr. Escalona Ojeda (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to recognize and pay tribute to our brother the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and to Minister for Foreign Affairs Choquehuanca Céspedes, who are present at this meeting. I would also like to acknowledge Ms. Nadine Heredia Humala, First Lady of the Republic of Peru.

As everyone has mentioned, we are today taking part in something of great significance. Humankind and the planet must pay an important debt of gratitude to the Plurinational State of Bolivia and its President, a leader from South America and the world, Mr. Evo Morales Ayma. Environmental issues and the defence of life in all its forms have taken on new dimensions since President Morales Ayma took responsibility for the future of the Bolivian nation. We are particularly proud of the fact that a member of the first communities of our continent can be here today to address the world in the name of all our peoples and in the name of those who have been abandoned — the ruled out, the passed over, the invisible and the dispossessed — and whom official history has ignored. I am not referring only to human beings, but to all natural beings, such as quinoa, coca and great food heritage and vast biodiversity, which, treated as a commodity, are being exploited and destroyed.

Today we are revindicating not only a plant or seed, but a culture of coexistence among human beings and nature and a culture of family farming and communal, local and regional farms linked to local and regional markets, not transnational markets. Those local markets are markets of people, not anonymous ones, where relationships are not between things but between people and the goods that come from nature — not something merely placed on market shelves. Those fruits have personality, which is why local markets are not subject to the laws of transnational markets.

Quinoa stands in contrast with genetically modified products. No one has to pay on a patent to sow quinoa; no one has to account to anyone else to plant it. Quinoa requires only permission from Nature herself and all the spirits of the universe. Quinoa can break with the geopolitics of food, as referred to by Henry Kissinger, "Control oil and you control nations; control food and you control the people".

As I have already underscored, such geopolitics is being implemented through genetically modified products and the futures markets. Each country is of course sovereign and can do what it likes, but I mention genetically modified products because they are the exclusive monopoly of the large food multinationals. Quinoa cannot be monopolized because of the qualities that have been described. It can be cultivated anywhere. It does not need special chemical fertilizers or particular temperatures. It merely requires the will and the spirit to sow it and harvest it.

Those that monopolize the food markets speculate on the futures markets. That is another way to implement food geopolitics and to control what people eat in order to dominate them. The futures markets have become one of the main causes of hunger with the increase in food prices. Quinoa must overcome the threat of international monopoly and market manipulation, which buys up harvests and controls their price on the markets. Quinoa provides the prospect of liberation and freedom. As President Evo Morales Ayma said, it is a 7,000-year-old legacy that was there then and is here today. It can provide not only food security but also food independence, national sovereignty and the independence to think and to act.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 14.

Members are reminded that a special ceremony to appoint the Special Ambassadors for the International Year of Quinoa of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations will be held here in the Hall immediately following the adjournment of this meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.